

Old Gospel Hour

The following is a poem by regular *Anabaptist Witness* contributor H.J. Recinos. He writes: *I wrote the poem Old Gospel Hour to reflect on how many churches reject the browning of the pews. I hope this poem remind Christians to bear witness to their Crucified Lord by crossing the boundaries of difference. The Word made flesh is nothing less than God's great border crossing into our world, the divine act of a God who weeps with us, a Crucified, rejected and scorned redeemer from what in today's vernacular speech name a community of color.*

I went to the church with

the altar that is marked by

a Cross surrounded by aged

air and closed my eyes tightly

after overhearing my brown

skin that so many of us have is

unwelcome. I did not ask for prayer

for the sick, the dying, the widow,

the orphan, the hungry, the imprisoned,

the rejected, the poor and scorned, but

felt each stare from those paid to

implore divine mercy. Among the

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crowd the clergy believed so highly

placed, the most high did not appear

to make the necessary rounds. I sat

in the service steered by a gospel of

their own making talking to my

brown Crucified Lord saying I do

still believe your blood was not vainly

spent. Then, rising for a blessing that

passed far overhead, I vaulted the

worship space weeping in silence.

Recinos is professor of Church and Society at the Perkins School of Theology at Southern Methodist University. Since the early-1980s, Harold Recinos has worked with the Salvadoran refugee community and with marginal communities in El Salvador for social justice. Recinos just completed a poetry manuscript due out in the new year with RP Press, Voices on the Corner.